

HERITAGE SOUTHWEST ISD NEWSLETTER

SPRING - MAY 2021

"Every child is a different kind of flower, and altogether, make this world a beautiful garden"
- Unknown



INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

New Name - New Logo

Employee Spotlights

Excellence in Innovation Award

Graduation 2021

Celebrating our Classrooms, Students, and Staff

- North Pointe Graduation Ceremony
- Essential Worker of the Week x 2
- GSC Community Advocate Award
- Celebrate Jen Hoseth - International Nurse's Day
- Captains of the Month
- Reading Time at BLC
- Book Talk with Author David Martin
- Earth Day
- Happy Mother's Day
- Midwest Energy Grant
- Thanks from Action Ministries
- Easter Art
- Happy Birthday Ms. High

Whatever It Takes Awards

NEW NAME - NEW LOGO

HERITAGE SOUTHWEST ISD

It's official! Lewis Cass Intermediate School District is changing its name to Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District. Board of Education members voted unanimously to accept the new name and the state has approved the change.



The process was a collaboration of community members and the BOE, which has been several months in the making. The decision was based on a majority consensus of Lewis Cass' role in the policy on the removal of Native Americans from their land and his political position for southern states to continue with owning slaves. The intention was not to change the significance of Lewis Cass In Michigan history, but rather to acknowledge the importance of the Native American and African American community in Cass County. Given the ISD provides educational services to all Cass County children regardless of race, the change aligns with the ISD's mission.

WNDU INTERVIEW -LEWIS CASS ISD NAME CHANGE

CTE STUDENTS CREATE NEW LOGO FOR HSISD

We will be seeing a lot more of this logo in the coming year thanks to the Edwardsburg Digital Design class. Mikki Spagnoli, ISD Director of CTE and Post Secondary Options, reached out to her CTE teacher, Kimberly Bellaire, at Edwardsburg High School about having the students create the new logo.

"When discussions came up regarding having our new logo created, Brent approached me asking if one of our CTE Graphic Design classes could mockup some samples. Edwardsburg's Graphic Design class rose to the challenge and provided so many ideas. I visited the class for a thank you donut party and the students were surprised that one of their designs was actually going to be used. What a great opportunity for our CTE students to use their knowledge and skill for our logo that will be used for years to come!"

A leadership committee at the ISD chose the pictured logos liking the way it looked like wind and nature. Both the full logo and "big H" will be featured on HSISD branding from now on.

Submitted by Alice Holcomb and Mikki Spagnoli, CTE Department



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS

CECILY OGDEN

Kind, fun, and "delightful" as a co-worker put it, are words to describe Cecily Ogden, School Social Worker and Autism Consultant at HSISD.

Cecily has been in this role for 10 years. Growing up on the east side of the state near Port Huron, she obtained a degree in social work and was employed as a middle school counselor before being laid off in the summer of 2011. Thankfully, she was willing to pick up and move almost anywhere to get back into



social work. Not a lot of schools were hiring at the time, and Lewis Cass had an opening that fit her qualifications.

Cecily has an office at North Pointe and likes the family feeling in the building, the community atmosphere, and support. In a small district like HSISD she can be involved in many varied opportunities, such as PBIS and autism training. Although her work is mostly in Edwardsburg, sometimes it is a challenge to work all over the county and not be in the office when there are virtual meetings...where do you go?

Family is very important to Cecily. Her parents are retired and split time between home in Port Huron and Madison, Wisconsin where her brother and family with twins' live. They will all be together for Memorial Day after a long period of "pandemic" distancing!

Here are a few excerpts from Cecily's spotlight interview:

Tell us something about yourself that would surprise us... - *"I was a 3rd grade superstar along with my brother on a TV commercial for a local travel agency."*

What do you like to do in your spare time? - *"During the pandemic I have embraced reading, jigsaw puzzles, and cross stitching. I want to get back to traveling to visit with friends and family in my spare time."*

What is on your bucket list? - *"I want to experience a hot air balloon!"*

What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery? *"I rent, so I think I'd buy a house."*

What is your favorite movie? *The movie from the 1980s - Adventures in Babysitting, and A League of their Own.*

What book did you read last or are you currently reading? Bear Town, by Fredrick Backman, I loved his book A Man Called Ove.

Where is your favorite place to eat? - *"I liked Zekes in Dowagiac before they closed. It was a good place to go with co-workers for lunch."*

Where would you like to go on a dream vacation? - *"I'd love to travel to the Mediterranean."*

You are happiest when? - *"When I'm with the most important people in my life."*

CRYSTAL SMITH

When asked what her role is at Heritage Southwest ISD, Crystal replies, Transportation Dispatcher AND Jack of All Trades. She has been the dispatcher since 1995 and began her career in 1989 as a receptionist fresh out of high school. She even worked at the ISD during high school in the summer youth program and in the Try Out Employment (T.O.E.) program.

Crystal says she has had five superintendents and four supervisors and except for the first one who taught her a thing or two, she has trained them all!

Crystal is proud that she has done just about every office job, subbing and helping wherever needed. She likes that the ISD is ever changing, and she gets the opportunity to meet so many different people in different departments, areas, and fields. It is also a challenge that the ISD is ever changing, "When the phone rings and the boss is on the line, I know something is going to change!"



Crystal was born in Dowagiac and calls herself a city girl having also grown up in Chicago. She has a "ton" of siblings, two children, and grandchildren.

Here are a few excerpts from Crystal's spotlight interview:

Tell us something about yourself that would surprise us... - *"I played the piano when I was younger and performed in recitals. Maybe I'll use my talent to teach children piano someday."*

What are 4 words that best describe you... *"Bubbly, outgoing (a social butterfly), modest, and enthusiastic."*

What do you like to do in your spare time? - *"Read! I am a bookworm. A favorite author of mine is Christine Feehan and I'm currently reading Dark Legend."*

What is on your bucket list? - *"I want to tour in Africa. I also dream to take the whole big extended family to Disney for a long-awaited vacation."*

What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery? *"I'd buy up some property and share lots with all my siblings and family."*

What is your favorite movie? *"I like action movies like Jason Bourne, The Fast and the Furious, and X-Men."*

If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would you like to see cast as you? *"Raven-Symone, the Disney actress."*

Where is your favorite place to eat? - *"Longhorn Steakhouse in Mishawaka has the best prime rib in my opinion."*

You are happiest when? - *"I'm around my grandchildren. They keep me busy!"*

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION AWARD

The United Way of Southwest Michigan recently celebrated organizations who have made an impact on their community in 2020 and rose to the challenges of a difficult year. Lewis Cass ISD (now HSISD) received the Excellence in Innovation Award. Superintendent Brent Holcomb accepted the award for our school.

"The ISD appreciates the support from United Way. Their recognition means a lot to our organization. It is a testament to the good work of the United Way of Southwest Michigan that they have stepped to the plate to support so many during the challenges of the pandemic. UWSM Rocks!" [#uwsncelebration](#)



**CELEBRATING CLASSROOMS, STUDENTS,
AND STAFF**



NORTH POINTE GRADUATION CEREMONY

WHEN

FRIDAY, JUNE 4TH, 10AM-12PM

WHERE

THIS IS AN ONLINE EVENT.

MORE INFORMATION

CONGRATULATIONS! Connor Batson, Chase Whitaker,
Quentin Sanabria and Jessica Johnson

This will be virtual for those who would like to attend
(except for families). Please be sure to mute during the
ceremonies.

Google Meet joining information:

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/mez-obdv-dcm>

Or dial: (US) +1 484-841-8292 PIN: 326 230 825#

ESSENTIAL WORKER OF THE WEEK X 2!

Congratulations! Matosha Morin, HSISD Speech Pathologist,
was voted the Sunny 101.5 Essential Worker of the Week on
April 22nd. Molly High, Teacher at North Pointe, was the winner



on May 6th. Both Molly and Matosha received \$101.50 along with gift certificates and other prizes.

Submitted by Michelle Derenzy, Special Education Supervisor, North Pointe Center



MOLLY HIGH

Essential Worker of the Week,
May 6, 2021



MATOSHA MORIN

Essential Worker of the Week,
April 22, 2021. Tosha is working with a group of students in Mrs. Yoder's classroom targeting pragmatic language/social skills

GREAT START COLLABORATIVE - COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AWARD

The GSC recognizes each year a Community Advocate to be awarded. This award is given to an individual or organization that has been outstanding in the area of advocacy on the behalf of families and children in Cass County.

This award is given to an individual or organization that advocates for all families and children across the Community. Advocating through support, encouragement, sponsorship, training, and promotion of resources towards every child being born healthy, thriving, and developmentally on track from birth through 3rd grade.



There are so many individuals and organizations that work tirelessly on the behalf of young children and families in many areas of advocacy that it makes it very difficult in giving this award. There has been one individual that stands up above the rest this year: **Brent Holcomb, Heritage Southwest ISD Superintendent.**

Brent has served on many boards and committees. He is the Cass County Great Start Collaborative Steering Committee Co-Chair, and GSC Equity Workgroup, where he was a huge part in bringing Dr. Mary Bacon to Cass County in 2019. Brent also serves on the Capacity Development Workgroup, and has been an active member with his wife Alice on the GSC Assess and Outreach Workgroup in the creation of the Cass County Community Resource Guide and in distributing them across Cass County, so families and children would have better access to needed services.

Brent also serves on the United Way of Southwest Michigan Board of Directors, and the Human Services Coordinating Council of Cass County Chair for the past 2 years. Brent is a member of the Social Justice Alliance of Cass County (SJACC), and once again was active in bringing Dr. Mary Bacon to join the group for two meetings in February 2021.

Brent has been active on Committees throughout Cass County:

- Cass County Coalition - (anti-drug group), Cass County CASA - participant and donor
- Imagine Cass - participant
- School Equity Caucus Board of Director
- ISD State Instructional Committee member

For fun, outside of work, Brent is a member of the Dowagiac Conservation Club, an avid forager of wild mushrooms on state forest and lumber company lands in Cass County (exact locations never to be revealed!). He is also an environmental awareness advocate, (i.e. trash picker!) He can't stand the amount of trash on the backroads, and has made it his duty to keep Cass County clean!

Submitted by Anna Carter, Director, Great Start Cass Collaborative

CELEBRATE JEN HOSETH – INTERNATIONAL NURSE'S DAY

Wednesday, May 12, 2021, was International Nurse's Day and Jennifer Hoseth was presented with gifts from staff at Brookside Learning Center. It was indeed a great time to honor our awesome district RN.



During this pandemic, Jen has gone above and beyond every single day (including weekends) for all of us. She worked tirelessly to make sure all staff and students were safe and healthy. When someone tested positive or had to quarantine, Jen was on the phone with parents and staff and their families. If staff members became ill, Jen would call them on a daily basis to check in with them and see how they were doing. She has ordered and made sure that the district had all PPE that was needed during this whole pandemic.

Jen has such a positive attitude and impact on everyone she meets and we are so honored to have her with us!

Here are a few quotes from BLC staff about Jen:

Jen called and checked up on each member of my family while we were quarantined as a precaution, and when we were actually sick. Every day she checks on our families well-being

and all of our students. Jen goes above and beyond to check on students who are not attending school. ~ Jon

Even outside of school she keeps the nurse hat on! When my husband was sick she gave us advice and kept checking in on him. ~ Teddi

When our family was sick with COVID, Jen called every day (even Saturday and Sunday) to check on us. When our boys started wrestling and had to undergo testing multiple times a week, Jen called (again on a Sunday evening, after dinner) and talked to the boys about what the testing was like. She explained to them how to do it over the phone so they were not anxious when they had to go in for their first rapid PCR test. Lewis Cass ISD is incredibly fortunate to have Jen Hoseth as our district nurse. Her commitment to the health of our students, staff and our families is unparalleled! ~ Mel

She checked on my daughter everyday while she was sick with corona and continued to check on my class while I was out. ~ Brandy

All those times she picked up food for JB's family when I worked in SXI! She has the most kind heart. Also every student in my class is just in love with her gentle personality! ~ Gina

I am so appreciative of Jen going out of her way. She always checked in with me when my Dad was sick. If I emailed her over the weekend with questions, even not school related, she was quick to respond. ~ Julie

Jen has been such an incredible resource for me this year in regards to Covid regulations and precautions. She completely took care of me when I had to quarantine, alerting all of the correct people for me, so that I didn't have to and then checking in on me. She has definitely gone above and beyond this whole year. ~ Chelsea

I can't tell you enough how helpful she has been to me! ~ Di

Submitted by Sally Brueck, Supervisor, Brookside Learning Center



CAPTAINS OF THE MONTH - SPRING 2021

Nate Brown-Tesch is one of the students earning Captain of the Month! Nate is very motivated to do well and complete his assignments. He enjoys being at school and doing what he can to be a successful student. He motivates other students to well.

Submitted by Jenni Clanton, Teacher, North Pointe Center





SYDNEY BORN

Sydney encourages all of her classmates to do their best. She is always doing her best by completing all of her assignments and helping others when they need help. Sydney demonstrates confidence and is a leader in the classroom.

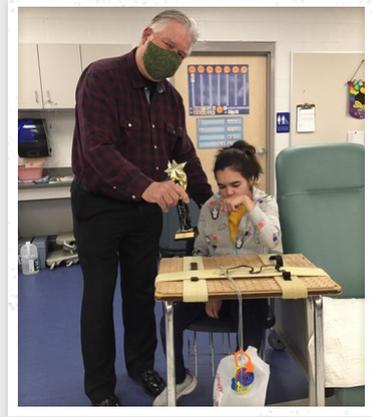
Submitted by Tracy Beatty, teacher, Ms Holly and Ms Michelle at Brookside Learning Center



LYRIC LIVINGSTON

Lyric does an amazing job staying with his class when we make transitions throughout the building (from the bus to the classroom, classroom to the gym, and our classroom to the bus). When we arrive at school, we can always count on him to independently wait outside the classroom door for a teacher to open the door for him. Once he is in the classroom, he independently takes off his coat, backpack, and hangs it up on his hook. He is doing a wonderful job and the entire SXI team is so proud of him!

Submitted by Kristin Holt, Teacher, Brookside Learning Center



LILLIANA (LILLY) GOGGINS

Lilly is encouraging to the other students as she works on walking independently. She encourages other students to be vocal in their own little ways. Her way is making tweeting sounds loud enough for the whole room to hear. Lilly encourages the staff members to be patient.

Submitted by Allie Park, Teacher, Brookside Learning Center



GRADY LAFFERTY

Grady is very accepting of all his friends in the classroom! He is willing to help everyone whether it is staff and/or his peers. He offers a pat on the back or hugs when someone is hurt!

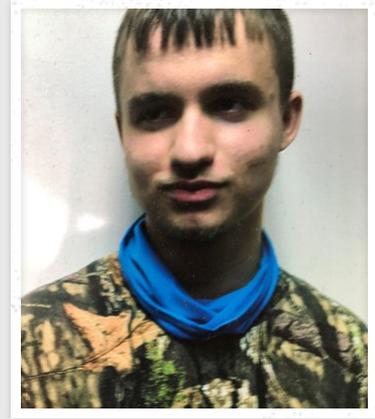
*Submitted by Lindsay Yoder,
Teacher, Brookside Learning
Center*



LEAH WILLIAMSON

Leah is accepting to helping us with her transfers from her wheelchair to her geri chair. She is also accepting with allowing us to help her with her feedings. She has been doing a great job.

*Submitted by Allie Park,
Teacher, Brookside Learning
Center*



ADAM PAYNE

Adam was chosen for Captain of the Month due to all the leadership roles he fulfills within our school. Adam is our Crew Chief Leader for our community service team at our local food bank. He leads other students by assigning them tasks and jobs. He then makes sure each team member knows how to complete their task, and instructs and makes sure everyone does their very best job before leaving the food bank.

*Submitted by Jane Miller-
Brinkley, Teacher, North Pointe
Center*



GINA BOWKER

Gina is a very outgoing little girl. Gina is very accepting of all of her peers in class. She is well mannered and accepts all tasks she is given.

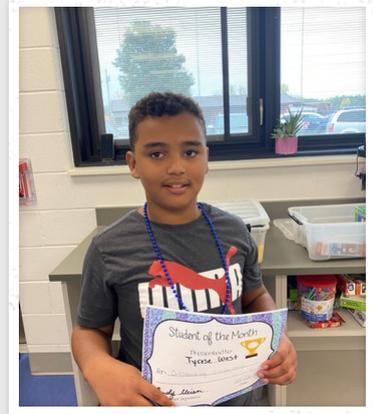
Submitted by Ashley Foster, Parapro, Miss Pam's classroom, Brookside Learning Center



BRAYDEN PLUMP

Brayden is a new student to our room and he has done a great job portraying the attribute of being Trustworthy. We can always count on him to wait with his classmates at the beginning of the day and walk with the group to our classroom. When we go to gym and when we go outside, he always listens for directions and waits for further guidance if needed, rather than acting on impulse. He is a great role model to the rest of our students in SXI!

Submitted by Kristen Holt, Teacher, Brookside Learning Center



TYRESE WEST

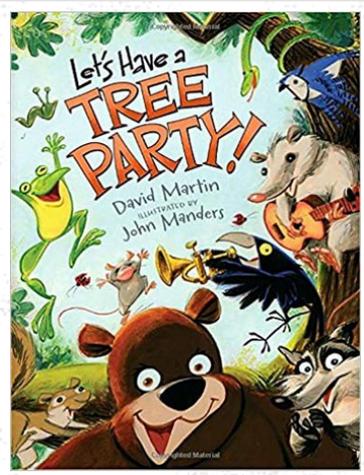
Tyrese is motivated when helping in class. He has been working on getting his materials and getting started right away with little time wasted. He is always motivating other students to get their work done or congratulating them on a job well done.

Submitted by Brandy Meiser, Miss Wilds and Miss Danzy, Brookside Learning Center

READING TIME AT BLC

Using the website <https://classroom.booksource.com/> I have electronically logged 100's of books for the students at Brookside to read and check out. Students now have access to the library at scheduled times with their class. There is space for students to spread out and read in a variety of flexible seating options. My class enjoys listening to a read aloud during our time. Donations for our library would be appreciated so that we can continue to expand our collection.

Submitted by Teddi Reynolds, MoCI K-3Teacher at Brookside Learning Center



BOOK TALK WITH AUTHOR DAVID MARTIN

I helped facilitate a virtual author visit for students at the Edwardsburg Primary School. Students enjoyed a Zoom presentation from author David Martin. They read books, sang songs, and learned how to create their very own accordion books. At the end, students were able to ask questions. Mr. Martin has authored over 25 children's picture books and early reader books. Titles include: Peep and Ducky, Shh! Bears Sleeping, Let's Have a Tree Party, and the soon-to-published The More the Merrier. I highly recommend purchasing some of his works for your classroom libraries!

Submitted by Danielle Ketchum, Speech Language Pathologist

EARTH DAY

Mrs. Meiser's class painted rocks for Earth Day and hid them around the school. All students at Brookside could find them and turn them in for a prize. The rocks had words that reminded the students of what Earth Day meant to them.



The students also made "seed bombs". We soaked paper in water and blended it to a pulp. Next we mixed in different flower seeds. When the paper dries you can plant it along with the seed to grow flowers.

Submitted by Brandy Meiser, Teacher, Brookside Learning Center



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

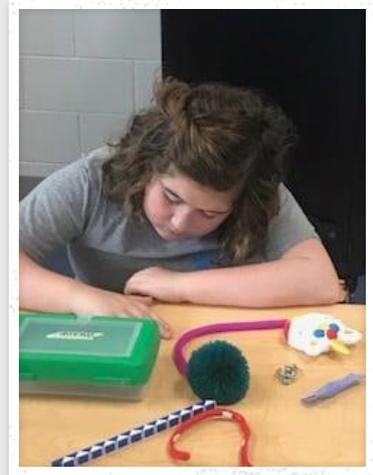
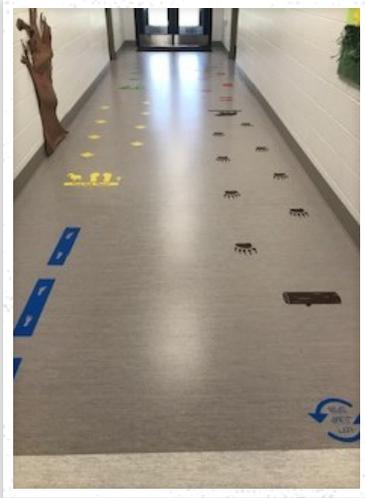
Students in the SCI classroom at Brookside made Mother's Day gifts for all of the mothers. Students enjoyed gluing all of the seashells to the picture frames and appreciated all of the help from staff members!

Submitted by Sandra Merckley, Parapro, SCI Classroom at Brookside Learning Center



Our classroom received a Midwest Energy Grant to purchase individual sensory boxes for each student in the classroom and a sensory path for all students to use at Brookside Learning Center.

Submitted by Lindsay Yoder, Upper Elementary MOCI Teacher, Brookside Learning Center



THANKS FROM ACTION MINISTRIES

Ms. Miller-Brinkley's class was honored by Action Ministries for their weekly service cleaning the food bank. Our students provide weekly cleaning services for Action Ministries so they are able to provide a clean and safe environment for community classes and for people to shop at the food bank. Our students create a clean and healthy environment to promote safety and wellness for local families in need of services received through Action Ministries.

Our class was treated to a wonderful pizza luncheon provided by the staff at Action Ministries. We are so thankful that they've given us the opportunity to learn new skills while contributing to the betterment of our community.

Submitted by Jane Miller-Brinkley, Teacher, North Pointe Center



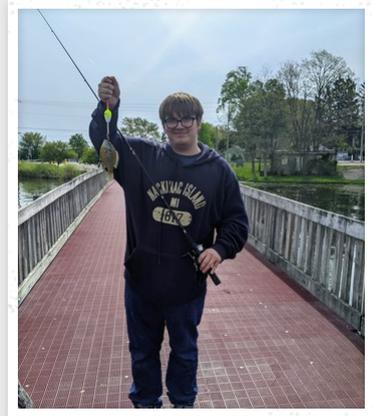
EASTER ART CREATIONS IN MISS KATHERINE AND MRS. BRINKLEY'S CLASSROOM



HAPPY BIRTHDAY MS. HIGH

Ms. High's classroom spent some time at Maple Island in Paw Paw recently. Some fishing and birthday cake made for a great time.

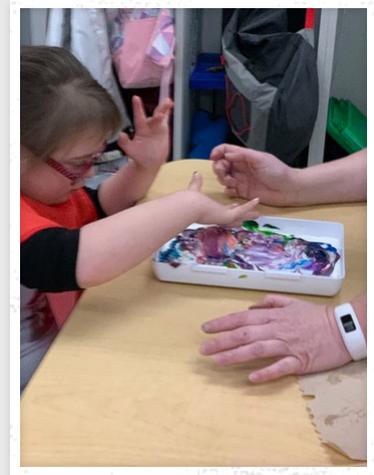
Submitted by Alice Holcomb, Administrative Assistant



HANDS-ON SCIENCE

Students in Mrs. Reynolds classroom used the cool whip method to dye Easter eggs! Another day they made my personal favorite, homemade slime!

Submitted by Alice Holcomb, Administrative Assistant



"WHATEVER IT TAKES" AWARDS

FREE LUNCH - JUNE 11

A big thank you to all staff. You make *Learning for All - Whatever It Takes* look easy, and this year has been anything but



Jenni Clanton (North Pointe) nominated by Shelly Derenzy (North Pointe)

Becky Fisette (Transportation) nominated by Gina Baybutt, Chris Kroepel, and Josi Da Cruz Kister (Brookside)

Nancy Neff (Admin) nominated by Sally Brueck (Brookside)

Becky Stauffer (Early Literacy Coach Admin) nominated by Josh Townsley (Admin)

APRIL GIFT CARD WINNERS

73 staff members were nominated for a Whatever It Takes card for the month of April That's 73 times someone went above and beyond or did something nice for someone. It's a great feeling to get the cards, that's for sure. April winners are:

Kim Currie (PT Brookside) nominated by Ashley Foster and Mary Jenison (BLC)

Julie Aigotti (Early On) nominated by Sally Brueck (BLC)

Ayren Parrish (PT Intern Brookside) nominated by Brandy Wilds (BLC)

Christine Hunt (Early On) nominated by Jody Miller (BLC)

Andi Smallbone (NPC) nominated by Sally Brueck (BLC)



STAY SAFE, STAY WELL, STAY CONNECTED

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